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Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EB-07 CCO-00 CIAE-00 OTPE-00 FCC-01
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R 301929Z DEC 76
FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9067
INFO AMEMBASSY CARACAS
USSOUTHCOM
AMCONSUL BARRANQUILLA
AMCONSUL CALI
AMCONSUL MEDELLIN

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: ETEL, ITU, CITEL, ECON, CO
SUBJECT: THE WEEK IN COLOMBIA

1. SUMMARY: THE GOC HAS INDIACATED IT INTENDS TO USE TELE-COMMUNICATIONS MEETINGS TO PUBLICIZE ITS POSITION ON NATIONAL SOVEREIGNTY OVER GEOSYNCHRONOUS ORBIT. THE USG AND GOC SIGNED A METEOROLOGICAL AGREEMENT. NEWLY NAMED FINANCE MINISTER ABDON ESPINOSA VALDERRAMA HAS ANNOUNCED SOME YEAR-END ECONOMIC MEASURES TO CARRY ON THE FIGHT AGAINST INFLATION. THEY PROBABLY WILL NOT MAKE MUCH OF AN IMPACT. GASOLINE PRICES WILL BE INCREASED JANUARY 15. CONCERN ABOUT COFFEE RUST HAS INCREASED.

2. GEOSYNCHRONOUS ORBIT AND TERRITORIAL SOVEREIGNTY. COLOMBIAN FONOFF OFFICIAL JOAQUIN FONSECA HAS TOLD US THAT AT THE WORLD ADMINISTRATIVE RADIO CONFERENCE IN GENEVA NEXT MONTH COLOMBIA WILL RAISE THE ISSUE OF NATIONAL SOVEREIGNTY OVER GEOSYNCHRONOUS ORBIT. WHILE THE GOC APPRECIATED USG CONCERN THAT THIS TECHNICAL MEETING SHOULD NOT BE USED TO DEPATE
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POLITICAL AND LEGAL QUESTIONS, FONSECA SAID, COLOMBIA INTENDED TO PUBLICIZE ITS POSITION IN ALL APPROPRIATE FORA (BOGOTA 12666).

3. METEOROLOGICAL AGREEMTN SIGNED. AMBASSADOR SANCHEZ AND THE DIRECTOR OF THE COLOMBIAN METEOROLOGICAL HYDROLOGICAL AND LAND IMPROVEMENT INSTITUTE (HIMAT) SIGNED A NEW METEOROLOGICAL

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AGREEMENT THIS WEEK ENDING SEVERAL MONTHS OF DISCUSSIONS. THE AGREEMENT IS CONCERNED PRIMARILY WITH THE ALLOCATION OF OBLIGATIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES FOR THE CONTINUATION OF THE SAN ANDRES WEATHER STATION, AND ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE BOGOTA UPPER AIR STATION (BOGOTA 12267).

4. NEW FINANCE MINISTER ANNOUNCES ADDITIONAL ECONOMIC MEASURES. THE NEWLY APPOINTED MINISTER OF FINANCE, ABDON ESPINOSA VALDERRAMA, ANNOUNCED A SERIES OF MEASURES TO CARRY ON THE FIGHT AGAINST INFLATION. PRIOR IMPORT DEPOSITS HAVE BEEN RAISED TO 30 PCT. URBAN RENTS HAVE BEEN FROZEN FOR ONE YEAR. INTERNAL LETTERS OF CREDIT, WHICH CIRCULATE IN THE EXTRA BANK MARKET, WILL NO LONGER BE NEGOTIABLE AND MUST REFLECT AN ACTUAL TRANSACTION FOR GOODS. THE REIMBURSEMENT FOR COFFEE EXPORT EARNINGS HAS BEEN RAISED FROM 284.65 PER BAG TO 307.6. THE NEW MINISTER CALLED THE INITIATIVES PART OF A MULTIPLE AND BASIC OFFENSIVE AGAINST INFLATION, AND THE PRESS HERALDED THE MEASURE AS TRANSCENDENTAL, BUT IN OUR VIEW THERE IS NOT MUCH IN THEM TO MAKE A STRONG IMPACT ON INFLATION (BOGOTA 12746).

5. GASOLINE PRICE INCREASE. AS EXPECTED, THE GOC HAS ANNOUNCED THAT THE PRICE OF MOTOR GASOLINE WILL BE RAISED AS OF JANUARY 15 AND THE SUBSIDY ON URBAN BUSES WILL BE INCREASED. SINCE THE GOVERNMENT SAYS IT HAS PERMANENTLY ABANDONED MONTHLY GASOLINE PRICE INCREASES, THIS 18 PCT HIKE WILL BARELY KEEP THE REAL PRICE OF GASOLINE FROM FALLING.

6. LA ROYA (COFFEE RUST). GOVERNMENT AND COFFEE FEDERATION REPRESENTATIVES RETURNED THIS WEEK FROM A FIFTEEN DAY SURVEY
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OF THE ROYA SITUATION IN NICARAGUA. THEY RETURNED EXPRESSING CONCERN AND ANNOUNCING THAT AN EMERGENCY PROGRAM WOULD BE DESIGNED FOR THE EVENTUALITY OF LA ROYA'S ARRIVAL. ONE OF THE TECHNICAL EXPERTS WHO MADE THE TRIP SAID THAT THE PROBABILITY OF THE SPREAD OF LA ROYA TO COLOMBIA WAS HIGH.
SANCHEZ

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